

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A ~~computer system implemented~~ method for facilitating a sale of a product from an inventory of a selling entity, ~~the computer system including a memory arrangement and at least one processing unit coupled to the memory arrangement,~~ the method comprising the steps of:

~~storing in the memory arrangement product inventory information related to the inventory of the selling entity;~~

~~storing in the memory arrangement configuration information related to selling entity products offered for sale by the selling entity;~~

interactively obtaining information regarding a customer's needs and a plurality of desired option selections related to one or more of products of the selling entity products;

interactively obtaining a value input associated with the desired options to rank the importance of each of the plurality of desired option selections;

~~interactively selecting one or more user-selectable product options from a list of user-selectable options to define~~ defining a configured product which satisfies the customer's needs and contain the desired option selections using one or more solvers containing logic rules ~~the stored configuration information~~ to constrain selection of the available product options; and

~~identifying from the an inventory of the selling entity, using the stored inventory information,~~ one or more available products which exactly corresponds to the configured product;

when an identified available product that exactly corresponds to the configured product is not found ~~in the stored inventory of the selling entity information,~~ identifying one or more products using the value input associated with the plurality of desired option selections to

determine one or more configured products found in the inventory of the selling entity that most closely matches the configured product having the desired option selections of the customer.

~~that more closely correspond to the configured product based upon a combination of values associated with the user-selectable options; and~~

~~that corresponds to a buildable product;~~

~~wherein the interactively selecting one or more user-selectable product options comprises:~~

~~identifying the product option interactively selected;~~

~~retrieving the configuration rules associated with the selected product option;~~

~~applying the configuration rules to the configurable product; and~~

~~altering the list of user-selectable options used to interactively configure a product based upon the configuration rules and the inventory available.~~

Claim 2 (Currently Amended): A method as recited in claim 1, ~~further comprising ranking the selected product options according to a value of the product options to the customer and, using the ranking to identify available and buildable products in inventory corresponding either exactly or most closely to the configured product.~~ wherein the value input associated with the plurality of desired options corresponds to a numeric value indicating importance of the corresponding desired option selection; and

wherein the one or more configured products found in the inventory of the selling entity that most closely matches the configured product having the desired option selections of the customer is determined using a summation of the numeric values for the value input associated with the plurality of desired option selections found in each of the one or more configured products found in the inventory of the selling entity.

Claim 3 (Currently Amended): A method as recited in claim 1, wherein ~~the stored configuration information comprises a plurality of configuration rules which define relationships between two or more product options:~~ the value input associated with the plurality of desired options corresponds to a relative value indicating importance of the corresponding desired option selection as compared to other desired option selections; and

wherein the one or more configured products found in the inventory of the selling entity that most closely matches the configured product having the plurality desired option selections of the customer is determined using the relative values of the value input associated with the desired option selections.

Claim 4 (Currently Amended): A method as recited in claim 3 2, wherein ~~the configuration rules comprises a plurality of logic rules~~ wherein the numeric value used in the value input corresponds to a value between 0 and 10.

Claim 5 (Currently Amended): A method as recited in claim 3 1, wherein the ~~configuration logic rules~~ comprise constraint configuration rules which define engineering relationships between product options used to constrain use of combinations of options.

Claim 6 (Currently Amended): A method as recited in claim 3 5, wherein the configuration rules comprise resource rules which define relationships between product options in terms of resources used and resources required.

Claim 7 (Currently Amended): A method as recited in claim 3 5, wherein the configuration rules comprise cross-reference rules which define relationships between similar product options.

Claim 8 (Cancelled)

Claim 9 (Cancelled)

Claim 10 (Cancelled)

Claim 11 (New): A method for facilitating a sale of a configurable product from an inventory of a selling entity, the method comprising the steps of:

interactively presenting a customer with a plurality of desired option selections available for inclusion within one or more of the selling entity configurable products;

interactively obtaining information regarding needs of the customer and a plurality of desired option selections related to one or more of the selling entity configurable products;

interactively obtaining a value input associated with the plurality of desired option selections ~~options~~ to rank importance of each of the desired option selections; and

defining a configured product found within the inventory of the selling entity which satisfies the needs of the customer and contains the desired option selections using one or more solvers containing logic rules to constrain selection of available product options;

interactively presenting a customer with the plurality of desired option selections comprises presenting a customer with a plurality of desired option selections that are found within one or more configured products in the inventory of the selling entity that contains all of the desired option selections specified by the customer; and

when the one or more configured products found in the inventory of the selling entity contain less than all of the plurality of desired selection option selections specified by the customer, identifying one or more configured products using a value input associated with the desired option selections to determine one or more configured products found in the inventory of the selling entity that most closely matches the configured product having the desired option selections of the customer.

Claim 12 (New): A method as recited in claim 11, wherein

the value input associated with the plurality of desired option selections corresponds to a numeric value indicating importance of the corresponding desired option selection; and

the one or more configured products found in the inventory of the selling entity that most closely matches the configured product having the desired option selections of the customer is determined using a summation of the numeric values for the value input associated with the desired option selections found in each of the one or more configured products found in the inventory of the selling entity.

Claim 13 (New): A method as recited in claim 11, wherein

the value input associated with the desired options corresponds to a relative value indicating importance of the corresponding desired option selection as compared to other desired option selections; and

the one or more configured products found in the inventory of the selling entity that most closely matches the configured product having the desired option selections of the customer is determined using the relative values of the value input associated with the desired option selections.